

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

The Whole Earth Owns the Ozone

Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 9–12 (research and classification)

Objectives: The student will:

- Recognize the call for environmental concern through these documents
- Complete an “Earth and Environment” chart based on environmental pollutants
- List the additions that each subsequent documents makes to the original
- Describe the relationships involved in the environmental issues developing since the 1970s

Time: 1 class period

Materials: Documents: **1985** *Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer*
1988 *The Montreal Protocol*
1992 *Excerpts from Agenda 21*
1992 *The Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development*

Exercises: *Earth and the Environment*

Access to the internet or computer lab for these sites:

- <http://untreaty.un.org/cod/avl/ha/vcpol/vcpol.html>
- http://ozone.unep.org/new_site/en/index.php
- http://ozone.unep.org/new_site/en/index.php
- http://ozone.unep.org/Publications/MP_Your_Ozone_website-E.pdf
- <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/index.shtml>

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

In 1977, the United Nations established the UN Environment Programme, known as UNEP, and formulated an action plan to protect the Earth's ozone layer. Scientists were just beginning to hypothesize that man's actions were having dangerous consequences for the Earth's outermost layer. Since the environment is part of the whole Earth and, therefore, the responsibility of all states, UNEP wanted to establish a global framework for dealing with the problem, which became the Vienna Convention of 1985. It was a notable accomplishment because the signatory states, for the first time, agreed to share scientific information and data.

Because of the enormous complexity of the problem, UN members understood that the Convention would be subject to change and constant discussion. As the United Nations—with input from member states and non-governmental organizations—continued to grapple with environmental problems, environmental protection became deeply entwined with the idea of sustainable development. Would protecting the environment hurt development in the poorest nations? Was it right to forbid developing nations from using the same polluting fuel that developed nations had already used on their own paths to prosperity? The UN's blueprint for action, "Agenda 21," explored the balance of social and environmental issues.

This document has had enormous influence on all UN conferences that have followed, including 1992's Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Secretary General Maurice Strong called the summit, "an historic moment for humanity." But the often acrimonious negotiations continue, with no single course of action accepted by all.

In this lesson, students will be asked to conduct research on the UN Environment Programme's website to discover the most recent issues and courses of action. They will also look for the latest data on ozone concentration in the Earth's atmosphere—and will discover that the UN now has an Ozone Secretariat.

Pre-Lesson

Sign up for the computer lab and or the wireless computer cart

Day One

- 1.** Distribute the documents and ask students to read and classify the information. This will be a difficult task.
- 2.** Discuss the classifications they have created. List the best on the board.
- 3.** Secure internet access and distribute the exercise, *Earth and Environment*. Direct students to go to all the listed web sites to complete the chart.
- 4.** Students who work quickly should finish parts A and B; assign the unfinished parts of the chart for homework.
- 5.** When the work has been completed, ask them to check their chart against the classification categories they created before beginning the research. Discuss the connections.
- 6.** Allow students to finish the chart (if necessary) and the questions for homework.

Extension Activities:

- 1.** View several videos about the ozone layer:
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUfVMogIdr8>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRayIgKublg&feature=relmfu>
- 2.** Plan a joint project with the Science Department on global warming.
- 3.** Create artistic renditions of Earth.
- 4.** Provide students with the document, *The Antarctic Treaty*, December 1, 1959.
- 5.** Gather the following information from the treaty and other related sources.
 - a.** Name the countries involved in the drafting of the Treaty.
 - b.** How will this be guaranteed as a place for “peaceful purposes.”
 - c.** What will be the principal activities of the continent?
 - d.** How will the occupants of Antarctica be prevented from engaging in non-peaceful purposes?”
 - e.** What is the status of “ownership of land” on the continent?
 - f.** Why is the use of Antarctica so crucial to efforts of global environmental protection?
- 6.** Consult a map of Antarctica and identify the countries and areas of occupation. ■